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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (REMOVED NOFORN CAPTION)

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SUBJECT: SRAP HOLBROOKE'S DECEMBER 3 BILAT MEETING WITH
TURKISH FM DAVUTOGLU

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Classified By: Deputy POL Counselor Mary Curtin, Reasons 1.4 b
and d.

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan (SRAP) Richard Holbrooke held a bilateral meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu on December 3 in Brussels to discuss the President's December 2 speech, Afghanistan's scheduled Parliamentary elections in May 2010, Turkey's important role in the region and its ability to do more in Afghanistan, and other issues.

-- FM Davutoglu said more must be done to publicly link military efforts to a well-defined, comprehensive strategy of national economic, political and development reforms, with concrete target dates for Afghanistan to meet specific goals.

-- Expressing support for Afghanistan's Constitution, Turkey believes the May 2010 Afghan Parliamentary elections are essential to strengthen a weak political process and establish a legitimate government that the public can support. Yet elections should be delayed but not canceled, and any postponement should be announced soon, with a new election date, preferably in 2010.

-- Turkey can do more to assist and is willing to take the lead to meet quietly with moderate Taliban and tribal leaders outside the region, if wanted.

-- Turkey also believes Asian nations can work more with international players to help bring regional stability. Turkey plans to facilitate this process in 2010 through its role as 2010 Chairman of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), where the U.S. has observer status.

-- On a separate subject, FM Davutoglu brought up Turkey's support for Bosnia to be granted MAP status at NATO, stating that this decision was taken for strategic reasons in order to help maintain Bosnia's territorial integrity while keeping them focused on advancing necessary reforms. END SUMMARY

The President's West Point Speech

¶2. (C) Noting strong U.S. support for Turkish participation in the December 2 meeting of Special Representatives on Afghanistan and Pakistan (SRAPs), SRAP Holbrooke asked how

the President's speech on Afghanistan had been received in Turkey, particularly the misperception that July 2011 was an "end" date for the United States. SRAP Holbrooke stressed that, instead, this would only constitute a date when the U.S. would begin to withdraw some troops as Afghan forces assumed more responsibility for their own security.

¶13. (C) FM Davutoglu said he had spoken to Prime Minister Erdogan early that morning and Turkey is more interested in the process that will take place over the next 18 months, not just the date. Noting his conversations with French FM Kouchner at Athens, Davutoglu said that Turkey and other allies agree that more troops are needed but that the military element has been over-stressed and not linked closely enough with progress on concrete economic, development and governmental reforms. Public diplomacy should concentrate on selling a more comprehensive package, and "an exit date will be positively received if seen in this context." Too much emphasis on the July 2011 date will be interpreted that the U.S. plans to withdraw regardless of achieving set goals, only strengthening the insurgents.

¶14. (C) Since a July 2011 date has been announced, however, FM Davutoglu said that an international strategy should have publicly-announced concrete objectives with target deadlines, perhaps under the auspices of a possible "Action Plan" for economic, government and developmental reforms. He stressed that by not doing so, accountability is lost and the Taliban only strengthened. This is another reason why the next round of Parliamentary elections need to be held, so that the people and opposition groups become more involved in a legitimate political process.

Parliamentary Elections Scheduled for May 2010

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¶15. (C) SRAP Holbrooke noted that SRAPs had discussed the Parliamentary elections extensively on December 2 and agreed to convey to Ministers the consensus view that a May 2010 election date was unrealistic if not impossible, both logistically and militarily. Noting the enormous demands the last Afghan election required (i.e., \$350 million price tag, and security for 7000 polling places which detracts majorly from ISAF's military mission), the SRAP said that elections could be rescheduled but that Allied consensus had not been achieved regarding when. Most Allies seem to feel that late 2010 could be possible, or perhaps in 2011, but this will require further discussion as well as concurrence from Ministers, before it could be conveyed to President Karzai.

¶16. (C) FM Davutoglu agreed that the May 2010 date was unrealistic, but stressed that Parliamentary elections are essential in any comprehensive political strategy and should be viewed as an important instrument and a strategic advantage, not as a risk. He cited Turkey's successful involvement in persuading opposing groups in Iraq to work together in 2005 as part of their own election efforts, and said Parliamentary elections should be seen as a necessity for legitimizing Afghanistan's government as well as developmental progress. Turkey can support a delay "but not a cancellation," but believes strongly that a new election date should be announced concurrently, along with expected political and economic reforms, generating greater public support.

¶17. (C) If announced in conjunction with a comprehensive development strategy, this would also justify publicly why a military buildup is essential, but only as one element of an overall strategy. FM Davutoglu said that "we know these are your intentions" but the U.S. needs to better explain this whole process to the Afghan and international public in order to gain greater support for U.S. efforts. This is the only

way to counteract Taliban disinformation.

What Turkey Would Like to See

¶8. (C) In response to SRAP Holbrooke's asking what is Turkey's grand view of Asia and what recommendations it had for the U.S., FM Davutoglu said that Turkey would like to see one "center" to coordinate all these positions and to prepare a "real action plan that gives Afghanistan real objectives with real timelines." This process should also include reconciliation efforts, which should not be limited but "open to all, except for Al-Qaeda elements." Turkey can be helpful explaining this process publicly because "we have access to all aspects of Afghan society."

¶9. (C) SRAP Holbrooke stressed that the link between the Parliamentary elections and Afghan achievements by 2011 is "very important," and that concrete objectives should be outlined. He also explained that the Obama Administration had been moving forward to effect deep institutional changes across Afghan society - in infrastructure, agriculture, economic, and government development. Afghanistan's second Presidential election was a significant accomplishment, with no demonstrations or riots, no civil war, and with Karzai himself, in the end, accepting a second round.

¶10. (C) FM Davutoglu also said that Turkey was willing, if wanted, to take the lead on meeting quietly with all moderate members of Afghan society, such as Taliban and tribal leaders, "even some of the skeptical ones from the opposition," and could do so in capitals outside the region, some of which have moderate elements' representatives living there. Excluding any Al-Qaeda elements, Turkey believes this discussion process needs to be "restarted" and will help promote a dialogue between all parties.

¶11. (C) FM Davutoglu then said that in 2010 Turkey would also like to see a more Asia-based approach developed, focused on promoting regional stability in Afghanistan and Central Asia. As Chairman in 2010 of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Turkey would like to see closer cooperation between the major nations of CICA, such as China, India, Russia and Japan, to address Afghanistan in the region, describing it and Pakistan as a "vacuum" in the heart of Asia. FM Davutoglu wants such

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an approach to work cooperatively with the comprehensive strategy he believes should be adopted in Afghanistan in the coming months.

¶12. (C) SRAP Holbrooke said that this would be welcome, praising Turkey for its major regional influence, and noting how Karzai respects Turkey's views. FM Davutoglu said that Turkey was in a unique position, able to speak to all regional players, to include Iran and Israel (both members of CICA), and supports seeking a consolidated approach to the region, not one which balances one set of interests against another. He cited a visit on October 25 by Turkish PM Erdogan to Pakistan as being a good example of Turkey's ability to "speak to all players," with PM Erdogan successfully persuading Pakistan's PM Gilani to meet with Pakistan President Zardari. FM Davutoglu added that Turkey would also like to see more regional involvement by Japan working in conjunction with the U.S. and the Allies.

IRAN

¶13. (C) The SRAP then asked where Iran fit into this equation. FM Davutoglu replied that Turkey shares deep cultural affinities with Iran, with one third of Iran's population being Turkish-speakers, and that it could not be ignored in the region. Turkey views the region as crucial,

especially in regards to energy security, which he asserted is part of Turkey's grand vision for Asia: "Turkey wants to see the oil flow west, not east." Noting that Iran seeks to export its oil to Europe and the West, Turkey has "regional advantages" vis--vis Iran, and suggested that it would be worthwhile for the U.S. and Turkey to discuss this more directly. FM Davutoglu noted that Turkey has been helpful to the U.S. in regards to Iran's nuclear ambitions.

BOSNIA

¶14. (C) FM Davutoglu also questioned why the U.S. did not support Turkey's endorsing Bosnia for Membership Action Plan (MAP) status at NATO. Citing UK and U.S. opposition, FM Davutoglu said that Turkey views the MAP decision as a political issue, not a technical one, and that Bosnia's weak territorial integrity and reform efforts will be strengthened by being included in MAP. Noting that Turkey, Bosnia and Serbia have been meeting monthly in a trilateral symposium, FM Davutoglu said that Bosnia is falling behind the region, especially Montenegro and Macedonia, and needs to be given more incentives to work with the International Community. An Action Plan will provide leverage to help Bosnians maintain their sovereignty while pushing them to adopt necessary reforms, but without offering automatic NATO membership.

¶15. (U) This cable was reviewed and cleared by S/P Derek Chollet on behalf of the SRAP delegation.

MURRAY